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STURMINSTER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1968

Medical Officer of Health: NOEL. F. PEARSON, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Chief Public Health Inspector: F. HODSON, F.A.P.H.I., M.I.P.H.E., M.R.S.H.

Council Offices,
STURMINSTER NEWTON,
Dorset.

May, 1969.

To The Chairman and Members,
SturminsterRural District Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit to you my Annual Report for the year 1968.

The report is prepared and will be circulated in accordance with the requirements of the Public Health Officers Regulations, 1959.

The vital statistics compare favourably with those for the country as a whole, with exception of infantile deaths. With the small numbers under consideration, no particular significance can be attached to this.

I am indebted to Mr. Hodson for his co-operation and help during the year and for his assistance in preparing this report; and also to Mrs. V. Donovan for her efficient services as my Clerk during the year.

May I also acknowledge the happy co-operation and assistance I always obtain from your Clerk, Mr. Harris, your Housing Manager, Miss Bradley, and all the members of your staff.

Finally, I would like to thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen, for your courtesy and consideration throughout the year.

I have the honour to be,

Your Obedient Servant,

Medical Officer of Health

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STURMINSTER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR

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A. Area 45,364 acres.
Rateable value: 1st April, 1968 ..... £238,671
Production of a penny rate 1968/69 ..... £994

VITAL STATISTICS

Population (Registrar General's mid year Estimate)..... 10,370
Natural decrease in the population (Deaths over births) 26

LIVE BIRTHS

	Male	Female		COMPARATIVE RATES: Sturminster R.D.C.	England & Wales
Total	68	72	Rate per 1,000 resident population = 13.5	16.3	16.9
Illegitimate	2	2			

STILL-BIRTHS

Total - all legitimate		2	Rate per 1,000 live & still-births = 14.0	14.0	14.0

DEATHS

TOTAL	78	88	Rate per 1,000 resident population =16.0	10.4	11.9

DEATHS IN INFANTS

Under 1 year	3	Nil	Infantile death rate per 1,000 live births =29.0	29.0	
Under 4 weeks	2	Nil			
Under 1 week	2	Nil			
Perinatal mortality			=25.0	25.0	25.0

	1968	1967	1966	1965
Deaths from Maternal Causes	nil	nil	nil	nil
Deaths from Tuberculosis	nil	1	nil	nil
Deaths from Cancer of Lungs	5	3	4	6
Deaths from Other Cancer	27	18	12	19
Deaths from Coronary Disease(Angina)	42	43	40	23
Deaths from Other Heart or Circulatory Disease	45	51	62	67
Deaths from Pneumonia	6	11	6	4
Deaths from Motor Vehicle Accidents	1	nil	nil	2
Deaths from All Other Accidents	1	nil	nil	nil
Deaths from Suicide	3	2	nil	1
Deaths from Leukaemia & Aleukaemia	1	1	1	nil
Deaths from Influenza	4	nil	2	1

B. NATURE OF THE DISTRICT

The district is essentially agricultural in character and many of the local industries are of this nature, which include the manufacture of animal feeding stuffs, cheese making, broiler chicken production and processing, together with the slaughter of animals for 'export' meat.

In addition, glove making, the manufacture of ready mixed concrete and the manufacture of caravans are local industries.

During the year, further efforts have been made to attract new industry into the district.

C. HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT which are not the responsibility of the District Council

Hospital coverage for the district is shared by the Yeatman Hospital at Sherborne, the Dorset County Hospital (both of the West Dorset Hospital Group), together with the Blandford Hospital and the Poole General Hospital (of the Bournemouth and East Dorset Hospital Group) of the Wessex Regional Hospital Board.

LABORATORY SERVICES

The Public Health Laboratory Service has once again proved co-operative, helpful and efficient.

GENERAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONER, OPTHALMIC AND PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

These are administered locally by the Dorset Executive Committee.

COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES

The personal preventive health services are the responsibility of the County Council.

They comprise the care of mothers and young children, maternity, school health, prophylactic innoculation, home nursing, mental health, the ambulance service, the care and after care of the tuberculous, blind and handicapped, health education, the domestic help service and the welfare of the aged.

DOMESTIC HOME HELP SERVICE

The assistance provided by the domestic home help service is of such incalculable benefit to the needy old people that it is difficult to recall how these people managed before this service was instituted.

But for this service, on which increasing demands are being made, many old people would be unable to survive in their own homes.

VOLUNTARY SERVICES

Acknowledgment must again be made to the excellent voluntary work carried out in the district by the British Red Cross Society, the Sturminster Voluntary Old People's Welfare Committee, the Sturminster Silver Thread Club, the Rotary Club and the W.R.V.S.

The latter provides a meals-on-wheels service, from which 73 old people benefitted compared with sixty during the preceding year.

This is a most valuable service. Not only are the meals appreciated by the old people, but even more (one sometimes thinks) are the twice weekly visits by helpers who take the meals round.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health - Noel F. Pearson, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H. (Part time)

He also acts as Medical Officer of Health to four other District Councils in the North Dorset area and as Senior Assistant County Medical Officer to the Dorset County Council.

The time available which he has to devote to his duties with your Council is one half day per week.

Dr. G. B. Hopkins of the Blandford and Wimborne Districts acts as his deputy during his absence on a reciprocal voluntary basis.

Public Health Inspector - F. Hodson, F.A.P H.I., M.I.P.H.E., M.R.S.H. (Part time)

Clerical Assistance - One Clerk, part time.

The Public Health Inspector also has responsibilities regarding Improvement Grants and administers the refuse collection service. He is also the appointed Inspector under the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act, 1963.

As it was (and still is) my considered opinion that an area with a population of 10,000 requires the services of the equivalent of one whole time public health inspector devoting his time solely to the statutory duties of a public health inspector, I prepared a memorandum on this subject for consideration by the Public Health Committee early in the year.

Since changes in the organisation of the administration of the Council were under consideration, I agreed to withold this memorandum, temporarily, until the reorganisation had been finalised. This will be taking place during the current year.

Whatever the changes made may be in relation to the duties of your Public Health Inspector, I would still record that it is my advice that the true equivalent of one whole time public health inspector is necessary in your district to give the necessary coverage of public health responsibilities normally undertaken by a public health inspector.

WATER SUPPLY

The Poole and East Dorset Water Board have responsibility for the public water supplies in the district.

There has been close co-operation with the Officers of the Board. Copies of the reports of the regular weekly samples taken by the Board are sent to this office. Similarly, reports on samples taken by your Officer are sent to the Board.

346 Sample reports were obtained from the Board and 2 taken by your Officers.

In quality and quantity the supply has remained stisfactory. Samples examined for lead content and plumbo solvency have proved satisfactory.

Household Supplies

Few houses in the district lack a piped water supply.

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

WOOLLAND - This village has a private supply from a spring which is satisfactory in quantity and quality. Seven samples were taken from this supply during the course of the year, all of which were satisfactory.

STOKE WAKE - This supply gives rise to concern by periodic failure and due to the content of iron in the water. During the Autumn, some work was carried out at the bore hole and the water seems to have been improved as the iron reaching consumers seems to have been much reduced.
Twenty two samples were taken from this supply during the year, thirteen being satisfactory, five suspect and four unsatisfactory.

BELCHALWELL - This small group of dwellings (five in all) is supplied from quite a good land spring, but there is occasional failure of the pump which supplies a small reservoir and this has led to complaints. When the main spring supplying these properties fails for some reason, there is an alternative supply which can be utilised but this is much less satisfactory than the one principally used. During the year ten samples have been taken from this hamlet, three being satisfactory, four suspect and three unsatisfactory. It is unlikely that anything can be done by way of improvement until the Water Board's new main is available. This, we understand, is the main which is likely to pass also through the parish of Stoke Wake.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

All the major parishes have got sewerage schemes. The only serious nuisance existing due to the lack of such a scheme is in the Moorside district of Marnhull.

A scheme to improve drainage in the Moorside area (in conjunction with drainage in the Todber area in the Shaftesbury Rural District) was prepared, but at the end of the year agreement with the Shaftesbury RDC had not been reached.

The scheme to eliminate the surcharging of sewers in the Pil-well area of Marnhull was completed during the year.

Cesspool Emptying

The cesspool emptying service provided by the Council under Section 76 of the Public Health Act, 1936, operated by contract, has continued to operate reasonably satisfactorily.

In an attempt to overcome the difficulties and indiscriminate disposal of cesspool contents, the old refuse tip at Fifehead Neville has been used for the disposal of the contents of all cesspools emptied in the district, including the tanks at slaughterhouses.

This experiment will continue as long as there is no nuisance arising from this disposal and if it can, in fact, continue indefinitely it will make a valuable contribution towards the control of the disposal of cesspool contents and should make some marked contribution in the animal health field.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

A fortnightly curbside collection (with a weekly trade refuse collection in Sturminster Newton) has continued during the year.

SALVAGE

£131 (compared with £15 during the previous year) was received from the sale of salvage. The increase was, in the main, due to the sale during the year of accummulated baled paper.

Salvage sold during the year:

Baled paper	£70
Rags, etc.	£ 7
Metal	£53

ROADSIDE SANITATION

Litter receptacles are supplied at laybys throughout the district; those on trunk roads being provided by the County Council and emptied by them, and also by our own vehicles when necessary.

No nuisance was experienced during the year.

RIVERS AND STREAMS POLLUTION

Again, two nuisances from silage pollution occurred.

OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES ACT, 1963

No. of inspectors appointed under the Act	1 (part time)
Estimated No. of Premises subject to Registration	69
No. of Premises registered	69
No. of Premises inspected	16
No. of inspections carried out	16

FACTORIES ACT, 1961

	No. of Premises on Register	Inspections	Written Notice
(i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	-	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	55	32	
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises).	46	39	3
Total:	101	71	3

Defects	Found	Remedied
Want of cleanliness	1	1
Sanitary conveniences:		
Insufficient	1	1
Unsuitable or defective	2	2
	4	4

No. of outworkers (Glove making) 38

CLEAN AIR ACT, 1956

No action was called for or taken during the year.

RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES ACT

No premises in the district are registered under the Act.

SWIMMING BATHS

There are no swimming baths in the district to which the public have access, but a number of private swimming pools are in use. Those at County Schools are supervised by the County Health Department.

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

One public convenience is provided by your Council in the car park at Sturminster Newton. Hand washing facilities (cold water) are supplied.

NOISE ABATEMENT ACT, 1960

Several instances have occurred in the year of nuisances arising from dogs barking, from the use of circular saws for cutting logs, and from the use of a diesel driven milk bale - all in proximity to houses.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS AND CAMPING SITES

There are three licensed caravan sites in the district. All these were for use by individual caravans. There are no large caravan sites in the district licensed by the District Council.

Nine visits of inspection were made to the licensed sites.

VERMINOUS PREMISES

During the year, the following infestations have been dealt with:

Ant infestations	.....	6
Fly "	.....	2
Cockroach "	.....	2

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949

The North Dorset Joint Rodent Committee of which the Sturminster Rural District Council is one of the six constituent authorities continued to carry out the provisions of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949.

In spite of difficulties arising in members of the staff, the efficiency of the service was maintained during the year although full statistical records are not available.

RAG, FLOCK AND OTHER FILLING MATERIALS ACT, 1951

There are no premises subject to registration under the abovementioned Act within the district.

PET ANIMALS ACT, 1951

There is only one property in the district licensed under the Act. This is where tropical birds are kept.

ANIMAL BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS ACT, 1963

There is one premises registered under this Act in the district. Two inspections were carried out.

Under the Act, with certain limited exceptions, any person who carries on a business of providing accommodation for other people's animals, even in a private house, must be registered under this Act by the District Council.

SCHOOLS(INCLUDING SCHOOL CANTEENS)

Regular inspections of school canteens have shewn a consistently high standard of hygiene.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACTS, 1948 and 1951 - Section 47

Once again, I am pleased to report that no statutory actions was required to be taken during the year under these Acts for the compulsory removal of an old person requiring care and attention, to an Institution.

Persons of this category are not unknown. One is, however, most reluctant to initiate action under this Act unless the welfare of other persons is seriously interfered with. It is rarely in the true interests of the persons themselves, when compulsory removal is so often followed by early demise, which cannot be disassociated from the compulsory removal.

One incidence occurred in your district a year ago when such action had to be most seriously considered. It was very difficult to decide whether or not the particular circumstances in the case called and justified for action being taken. A year later I am pleased that the risk was accepted for it has allowed the person concerned to enjoy one more year, at least, to remain in her own home, where she wants to be.

HOUSING

No. of houses in the district 3,759

Inspection of dwelling houses during the year

No. of dwelling houses inspected	136
No. of inspections made	343
No. of informal notices served	15
No. of informal notices complied with	9
No. of statutory notices served	nil
No. of statutory notices complied with	nil
No. of houses reported under Section 16 of the Housing Act 1958	nil

Action taken by the Local Authority in respect of such houses:

Demolition orders made	nil
Undertakings accepted for:	
Closure	nil
Reconditioning	nil
Other action	nil

No. of houses included in Clearance Areas during the year ..... nil

Overcrowding

No case of statutory overcrowding was found during the year.

Slum Clearance

There are few houses in the district which remain 'unfit' within the statutory definition of unfitness and slum clearance, therefore, presents no problem.

No action was taken to implement Section 13 of the Housing Act, 1964, toward the definition of Improvement Areas.

Housing

One hundred and thirty four new houses were erected by private enterprise, compared with sixty two in the previous year.

Twenty dwellings were provided by the Council. These constitute the grouped dwellings (flatlets) at Brinsley Court - providing welfare facilities and warden supervision.

The Hanover Housing Association group of old people's flats (26) also providing welfare facilities and warden supervision were also completed during the year.

This provision has gone a long way to meeting the demand locally for old people's dwellings. The next step, now under consideration, is to provide suitable background heating and improved facilities in the individual old people's bungalows to enable the occupants of those to enjoy some of the benefits of those living in the grouped old people's dwellings.

Houses Let in Lodgings

No houses are known to be let in lodgings.

Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954.

No applications were received during the year for certificates of disrepair under the above-mentioned Act.

Improvement Grants

Twenty one applications were received during the year in respect of standard, and four in respect of discretionary grants, compared with sixteen and four respectively during the preceding year.

Re-housing

During the year, one hundred and two applicants were housed by the Council. At the end of the year there were ninety-six applicants on the Waiting List, compared with one hundred and four a year previously.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES

1. Milk

Milk & Dairies (General) Regulations, 1959.

No. of 'dairies' in the district subject to registrations 5

No. of 'distributors' subject to registration 12

Samples

To avoid duplication, routine sampling of milk in the district is carried out by officers of the County Council only. Twenty six samples were taken during the year by them and two by your officer.

Brucellosis

No samples of milk were submitted by your officers for examination for Brucella infection. Routine examination of samples is made by the County staff and positive results notified. One positive result in your district was notified during the year. Appropriate action was taken to check that the infected milk was subjected to adequate heat treatment.

Milk & Dairies (General) Regulations, 1959.
Regulations 19-20

A warning letter had to be sent to a particular dairy supplying milk into your district, with regard to the delivery of milk in an unclean bottle.

Salmonellosis infection amongst farm animals (principally calves) is an increasing public health hazard.

When notification of this infection is received from the Divisional Veterinary Officer, enquiries are made at the farm so that appropriate advice can be given to the prevent the spread to members of the farm workers' families or the general public through the milk supply.

Unfortunately, it is by no means certain that all instances come to notice as there is no statutory duty placed on a farmer or private veterinary surgeon to notify such outbreaks amongst farm animals, either to the Divisonal Veterinary Officer or the District Medical Officer of Health.

2. Other Food Premises

The number of food premises in the area, by type of business subject to Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1960:

Trade	No. of Premises	No. of Premises fitted to comply with Reg. 16.	No. of Premises to which Reg. 19 applies	No. of Premises fitted to comply with Reg. 19.
Hotels	5	5	5	5
Cafes	6	6	6	6
Public Houses	23	23	23	23
Clubs	2	2	2	2
Church Halls	4	3	3	3
Canteens - Schools	11	11	11	11
Confectioners	2	2	2	2
Meat and Fish	10	10	10	10
Grocers	32	32	32	32
Mixed Stores	16	16	16	16
Boarding Schools	3	3	3	3
Food Factories	10	10	10	10
Others	6	3	3	3
Total:	130	126	126	126

No. of food premises subject to registration under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, in respect of:

Ice Cream 46
Sausages and Prepared Meats 11
Fish and Chips 2

One hundred and twenty of the premises were inspected during the year, one hundred and sixty one inspections being carried out.

Food Inspection

Eighteen samples of meat or meat products were submitted for bacteriological examination, all of which gave satisfactory results.

Sixty three swabbings of equipment were carried out, all of which gave satisfactory samples.

These results are most satisfactory. The spot swabbing of equipment first started five years ago may well have resulted in greater care being given to such equipment.

When one considers the nature of knacker meat and the conditions under which it is cut up, it is surprising to note that of the seventeen samples submitted for bacteriological examination not one gave an unsatisfactory result.

THE LIQUID EGG (PASTEURISATION) REGULATIONS, 1963

There are no liquid egg pasterisation plants in the district, and no samples of liquid egg were subject to the Alpha Amylase test.

INTENSIVE FARMING

Twelve samples of pig slurry were sent for bacteriological examination. Not one showed the presence of pathogenic organisms.

POULTRY INSPECTION

The following information is particularly asked for by the Ministry of Health.

No. of poultry processing premises within the district .....3.(small units)

No. of visits to these premises 5

Total no. of birds processed during the year .....not known

Type of birds processed - e.g. turkeys, ducks, hens, broilers, capons, etc.....mainly hens and capons.

Percentage of birds rejected as unfit for human consumption ..... not known.

Weight of poulty condemned as unfit for human consumption 20 lbs

Comments on poultry processing and inspection ..... nil.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS (WASTE FOODS) ORDER, 1957

There are no licensed premises in the district.

MEAT INSPECTION

The meat inspection continued to be carried out by local Veterinary Surgeons on behalf of the Council.

There are two licensed slaughterhouses and one knackers yard in the district.

Carcases and Offal Inspected and Condemned.

1968

	Cattle Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	808	4931	927	4724	86
Number inspected	808	4931	927	4724	86
All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci					
Whole carcases condemned	5	200	127	99	27
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	157	2929	67	2549	16
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci	20x0	63x4	20x9	56x0	50x0
Tuberculosis only					
Whole carcases condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	-	-	-	-	-
Cysticercosis					
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	-	8	-	-	-
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	-	8	-	-	-
Generalised and totally condemned	-	-	-	-	-

In addition to the above animals, 127 goats were slaughtered and inspected. Four were found to be unfit in whole or part.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY INSPECTIONS (INCLUDING HOUSING) CARRIED OUT

Total no. of inspections (under all headings)	1,589
Total no. of informal notices served	61
Total no. of informal notices complied with	43
Total no. of statutory notices served	nil
Total no. of statutory notices complied with	nil
Total no. of prosecutions	nil

E. NOTIFIABLE DISEASE

Other than Tuberculosis:

Diease	Total Cases Notified
Measles	4
Whooping cough	14
Infective Jaundice	1

Tuberculosis	Respiratory	Non-Respiratory
New Cases Notified	nil	nil

Food Poisoning

No cases of suspected food poisoning were notified during the year.

NOEL F. PEARSON

Medical Officer of Health